

# Planning Possibilities

News & views brought to you by Michelle Coussens

## Welcome to my August 2018 Issue!

*Remember the movie “Caddyshack”? I was re-watching it the other day and thought about that scene where Chevy Chase’s character, Ty Webb, talks about “Be the ball, Danny”:*

*Ty Webb: “I’m going to give you a little advice. There’s a force in the universe that makes things happen. And all you have to do is get in touch with it, stop thinking, let things happen, and be the ball.”*

*All joking aside, how are you tapping into the forces at hand? How are you aligning yourself with the right circumstances, the right people, the right conditions? Something to think about as we start to shift into “back-to-school” mode.*



### Inside this issue:

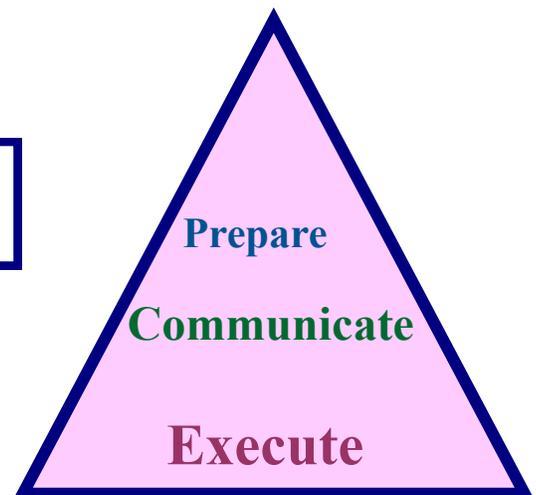
Planning for Project Management	2
Planning Predicaments	2
Communication Corner	2
Online Plug of the Month	2
Book Banter	3
Personally Yours	3
Contact Information	4

Michelle

### Planning for Good Decisions

#### PLAN B CONSULTING MISSION STATEMENT

**To assist organizations in becoming more effective and efficient through practical business planning, resulting in meaningful and measurable outputs, outcomes, and impact.**



Good strategic planning leads to the determination of the right projects of focus in both the short-term and long-term. Operationalizing the goals and objectives of an organization typically requires definitive outline and articulation of steps from start to finish, along with the resources needed to complete them. This issue, and several future issues, focus on that important translation of vision and intentions into those concrete actions.

Learn more about the definition of a project and the related definition of programs on page two.

## Planning for Project Management: Starting with definitions

What is a project? It is an endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result that has a specific start and end point, resulting in a finite period of time for completion. How is that different than a “program”? A program represents a group of *related* projects that collectively serve to accomplish a common goal over an extended period of time. Program management, therefore, is that process of managing and coordinating these interdependent projects to achieve or contribute to the organization’s broader goals and objectives. Projects are divided further into high-level tasks, which are, in turn, split into work packages that are themselves composed of work units. A work package is defined as the lowest level of the work breakdown structure for which cost and duration can be estimated and managed. And, it is composed of work units.

Since all work and/or efforts performed within an organization are characterized as either operations or projects, all of the efforts of an organization must be distributed to either operations or projects. Projects are initiated by organizations for a variety of reasons, such as to meet a business need, attain a strategic objective or meet a market demand. The only way organizations can accomplish any of these goals is by expending resources of the organization over time, for a cost. Operations represent the day-to-day ongoing activities. These persist and continue and do not have a definitive initialization and termination (in aggregate).

### Planning Predicaments: Are we all interim managers?

Where  
planning  
concepts  
meet  
reality

Wikipedia defines “interim manager” as “the temporary provision of management resources and skills... the short-term assignment of a proven heavyweight... to manage a period of transition, crisis or change within an organization. In this situation, a permanent role may be unnecessary or impossible to find on short notice. Additionally, there may be nobody internally who is suitable for, or available to take up, the position in question”. Based on this definition, it used to be that interim manager referred to someone who only temporarily held a given position managing others, and that person in the role knew the position was temporary.

Today, you may consider that in a sense, we are all temporary managers. Positions come and go through evolution and elimination, and people also change jobs frequently. If you consider your role temporary, does that change what you plan to accomplish and how you will go about it?

### Communication Corner

I was teaching a course last week where a participant was discussing a workplace issue where doctors they contract with need to use electronic devices in recording patient assessments, symptoms, and treatments, rather than using paper and pen. The participant was frustrated that a large number of physicians were resisting the electronic shift. It reminded me that there are more ways to communicate today than ever before, that technology plays a strong role in helping us to be more efficient in communication, and that it can provide many different options to do things, as well.

For instance, doctors can use dictation software that translates their words into written text, requiring them to merely do a quick proofread. In addition, they can use software that has pre-selected phrases that they can click on to populate phrases or even whole sentences. And, there are even check box options to click on the most common categories, discussions, and recommendations.

These are tools we can use in other business settings. Introducing such time-saving tools not only can also lead to even better, more reliable documentation, but it can also determine what would motivate doctors (and others) to transition to using the technology. Different users might have different reasons for reluctance. Investigating that may make all the difference.

### Online Plug of the Month



Green Biz puts out several different useful e-newsletters. For instance, their latest transportation newsletter discusses how associated infrastructure is shrinking, as well as dockless bike-sharing, why Lyft is buying Motivate, Tesla production update, mobility options for low-income neighborhoods, electric vehicles, cities’ roles in automated futures, solar investments, and more.

Sign up for any or all of their newsletters on a variety of green topics at:

<https://www.greenbiz.com/subscribe>



## Book Banter

**Glimmer: How design can transform your life, and maybe even the world,**  
by Warren Berger, Featuring the ideas and wisdom of design visionary  
Bruce Mau, 2009, The Penguin Press.

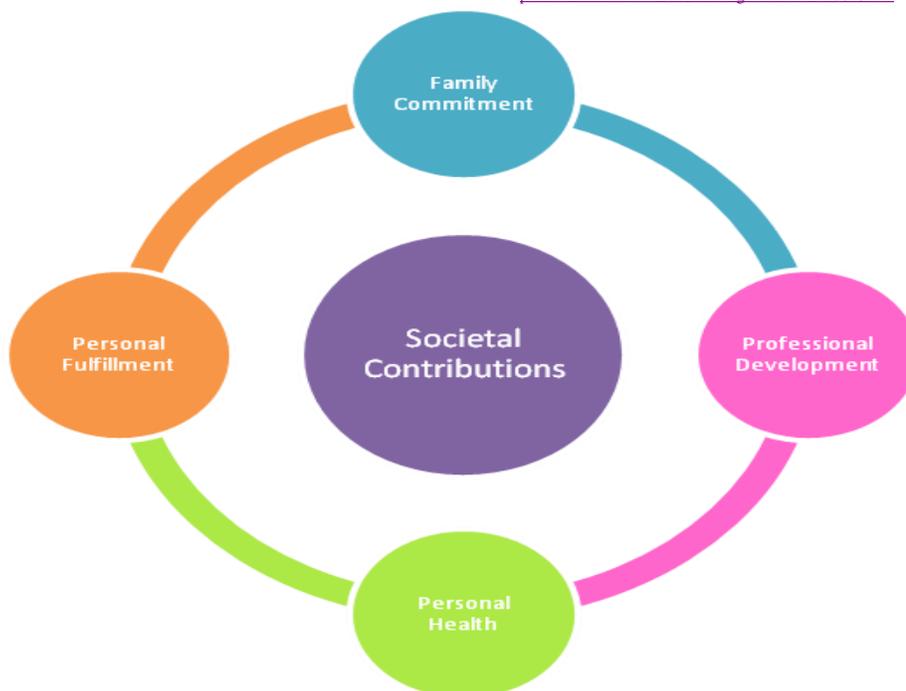
Design has become a prominent topic in many business programs and courses for both college students and seasoned professionals. There is value in its approach in relation to innovation and evolution. As the book describes it, “design is really a way of looking at the world with an eye toward changing it. To do that, a designer must be able to see not just what is, but what might be. And seeing is only the beginning: Designers are also makers. They sketch and build, giving form to ideas...” (p. 3).

The book emphasizes ten different principles within the four categories of universal, business, social, and personal, illustrating how design can affect and benefit each. The book also discusses IDEO’s Five Whys Methodology. In addition, among other valuable concepts, it discusses the value of “smart recombinations”—connecting different concepts to each other to generate new ideas; experience mapping, where the stages of people’s experiences are plotted and analyzed; and 180-degree thinking where people try to conceive of something that would have the opposite effect of what they are actually trying to create.

Once you introduce yourself to this book and its focus on the design approach to thinking, you may want to explore other training opportunities to enhance your understanding and learn additional ways to apply the approach to your organizations.

## Personally Yours

Source: <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2018/spending-patterns-of-millennials-and-earlier-generations-in-2016.htm>



I recently saw data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics on share of personal expenditures for selected categories, based on its Consumer Expenditures surveys. The categories below accounted for over 75% of households’ expenses:

- Food: 13%, including at home 7% and away from the home 6%
- Housing: 33%, including 11% owning and 6% renting
- Phone Services: 3%, including 1% residential services and 2% cellular services
- Apparel/Services: 3%
- Transportation: 16%, including 3% for new cars and 3% for used cars
- Healthcare: 8%, including 6% towards health insurance,

How does your household compare? What does it mean to you if you see your distribution of spending differently? Do you consciously track your expenses in this way?

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**Services include:**

- Speaking and training in planning and business management
- Personal coaching sessions on business performance and management
- Assistance in strategic/business plan development, update, review, and/or revision
- Customized market research and competitive intelligence analysis
- Strategic facilitation of the planning process
- Board retreat facilitation

**This newsletter is intended to provide useful information but should not be construed as legal or financial fact, advice, or opinion.**

**Coming in September...**

- \* **Planning implications of project management trends**
- \* **Book discussion of Organizing Your Day: Time Management Techniques That Will Work For You, by Sandra Felton and Marsha Sims, 2009, Revell.**
- \* **And more!**



Have an idea or comment to share? Have a topic suggestion or planning question? Send it in! I would love to hear from you!

**Be My Guest/Reader Feature**

Have a planning success or horror story? Have some tips for others? I would love to feature you. If you are interested in being included in a future newsletter, let me know if you would like to write a guest column or be interviewed.

**UPCOMING TRAINING & SPEAKING EVENTS**

- \* **09/17/18-09/18/18: Analytical Thinking, American Management Association, Chicago, IL, register at [www.amanet.org](http://www.amanet.org).**
- \* **10/01/18-10/02/18: Critical Thinking, American Management Association, Chicago, IL, register at [www.amanet.org](http://www.amanet.org).**
- \* **10/11/18-12/06/18: Leadership (online), College of DuPage, register at [www.cod.edu](http://www.cod.edu).**
- \* **10/15/18-12/03/18: Introduction to Business (Monday evenings, Glen Ellyn campus), College of DuPage, register at: [www.cod.edu](http://www.cod.edu).**
- \* **10/18/18-10/19/18: Strategic Thinking, American Management Association, Atlanta, GA, register at [www.amanet.org](http://www.amanet.org).**
- \* **11/12/18-11/13/18: Strategic Thinking, American Management Association, Chicago, IL, register at [www.amanet.org](http://www.amanet.org).**
- \* **11/14/18-11/16/18: Strategy Execution, American Management Association, New York City, NY, register at [www.amanet.org](http://www.amanet.org).**
- \* **11/26/18-11/28/18: Strategy Execution, American Management Association, Chicago, IL, register at [www.amanet.org](http://www.amanet.org).**
- \* **12/02/18-12/03/18: Developing a Winning Business Plan, NeighborWorks® America, Pittsburg, PA, [www.neighborworks.org](http://www.neighborworks.org).**

*Email me for details!*